



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

## Research and Evaluation Data Analyst

First Things First (FTF), also known as the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board, is a public agency that exists to increase the quality of, and access to, the early childhood development and health system that ensures a child entering school comes healthy and ready to succeed. Passed by voter initiative in 2006, First Things First operates through a tax on tobacco products. Governed by a state board and Regional Partnership Councils, First Things First is a decentralized organization that engages diverse constituencies to accomplish its mission. Organizational values include a focus on accountability, transparency, coordination, collaboration and on the outcomes that will ensure young children start kindergarten ready for school and life. First Things First acts in accordance with our Beliefs, Actions and Performance statements, which are attached.

### Job Summary

The Research and Evaluation Data Analyst works under the direction of and in collaboration with the Senior Director of Research and Evaluation division at First Things First. Primary areas of responsibility include: 1) Conceptual and technical research and data related support to all research and evaluation efforts and programmatic activities of the organization; and 2) management of divisional project workflow and supervision of evaluation and project specialists.

### Distinguishing Characteristics

The ideal candidate will enthusiastically support the vision and mission of First Things First and possess the personal qualities of integrity and credibility. She/he will have the proven ability to work within teams to accomplish multiple tasks and keep multiple projects organized and progressing towards successful completion. This is a key position within the FTF Research and Evaluation team, and her/his work is critical to the successful delivery of services by the unit as a whole.

### Typical/Essential Duties and Responsibilities

Under the supervision of the senior director of research and evaluation:

- Manage and implement FTF evaluation efforts including projects identified in the FTF evaluation plan and strategic operational plan.
  - Assist the senior director in ensuring strategy implementation data and research and evaluation study findings are effectively disseminated and used for ongoing program improvement, as well as board and regional council decision making/strategic planning.
  - Conduct research on issues relevant to FTF's system approach and create an analytic framework that will continuously improve FTF outcome data.
  - Organize and facilitate meetings with key FTF councils, staff and local stakeholders to elicit input into FTF research and evaluation activities under the guidance of the senior director of research and evaluation.
  - Effectively communicate progress and impediments to the senior director on all assigned projects.

- Has primary responsibility for the analysis of statewide and local partnership data as well as population level or programmatic early childhood data as part of FTF projects to identify trends that have program and policy implications.
- Use statistical software (e.g. SPSS, MySQL, Strata) to manage data sets (including codebooks; syntaxes) and conduct analyses ranging from descriptive analysis to multivariate analyses (including trend analysis), and analyses of qualitative data.
- Summarize results in written format suitable for consumption by various audiences including FTF board, regional councils, staff, and stakeholder groups (e.g., technical reports, summary reports, data presentations, graphical outputs and policy briefs). Create public reports in coordination with communications division staff.
- Work with evaluation team members to report data findings and offer data interpretation support for internal and external audiences.
- Travel within the regional areas of FTF to make public presentations and meet with staff, councils and grantees.
- Represent research and evaluation team in internal cross-divisional planning and update meetings such as Regional Area Teams, Statewide Area Team and Strategy Implementation Teams.
- Maintain regular communication with First Things First regional staff regarding research and evaluation projects, and serve as a resource to provide updates to regional councils.
- Coordinate with the senior director and evaluation teammates on professional development trainings for FTF staff.
- Plan, lead and manage multiple projects (including cross-divisional projects), establish goals with senior director, set time line and effectively communicate priorities to teammates.

*Programmatic Strategy Implementation related responsibilities:*

- Work with the evaluation, program and regional teammates to identify, align and finalize data reporting requirements with strategy specific standards of practice for FTF funded statewide and regional grants and agreements, including inter-governmental and tribal agreements.
- Plan and supervise grant partner training on data requirements related to funded strategies.
- Lead and work with evaluation, Information Technology (IT) and other cross-divisional teammates to produce quarterly grantee data reports for regional councils, FTF board reports, annual reports and other ad-hoc reports as required.
- Develop and/or supervise business requirements for IT data reports/dashboard.
- Supervise user acceptance testing of automated data reporting and validation of data prior to release of deliverables to end users.
- Monitor grantee performance data in collaboration with FTF quality assurance team, program and regional area teams.
- Review and coordinate with FTF finance team to align data reports with financial reports, and conduct/supervise cost analysis on strategies as required.
- Work with Quality First data coordinator and larger Quality First team (AZ Quality Improvement and Rating System) to develop Quality First and related strategies' data analysis plan and produce data reports.

*Research and Evaluation Studies related responsibilities:*

- Develop scope, methodology/design, and determine deliverables for evaluation and research studies undertaken by First Things First to evaluate programmatic and systematic progress (e.g. Statewide and Regional Needs and Assets study, regionally funded strategy and program evaluation studies).

- Serve as a partner and expert resource to regional councils and regional staff to identify and develop scope for regional studies based on regional needs.
- Coordinate with FTF Tribal Affairs team to plan tribal regional studies and/or evaluation efforts that incorporates data related to tribal populations in compliance with FTF Tribal Consultation Policy.
- Work with procurement staff to release request for proposals (RFPs/RFPs) for research and evaluation studies, review and select competent external consultants/vendors.
- Manage research and evaluation studies— provide technical assistance to contractors/vendors, manage vendor performance, review project deliverables towards meeting expectations, and finalize reports.
- Provide status update on studies to program and regional staff, and incorporate their feedback towards improving deliverables.
- Coordinate with FTF regional and program staff to support regional councils and FTF board to utilize study findings towards regional and statewide strategic planning.
- Assist with writing grant proposals, preparing status reports, national reports (e.g. NIEER report), conference presentations and papers for publications.
- Identify and/or design appropriate instrumentation (e.g., surveys, interview protocols, knowledge assessments) for responding to research and evaluation questions.
- Represent FTF in state and county-wide data development and data sharing efforts.
  - Work with state partner agencies and other partners on data sharing protocols and processes towards accessing data as part of FTF evaluation efforts (e.g. Needs and Assets studies, School Readiness Indicators/ benchmarking project, Kindergarten Readiness Assessment) and building the FTF early childhood integrated data system.
  - Effectively collaborate with IT, finance and external affairs (e.g. communications, tribal affairs) teams in FTF to handle data exchange/sharing agreements (e.g. MOUs), data security and maintenance protocols, as well as policies related to public dissemination of data.
- Undertake other duties as assigned by the Senior Director of Research and Evaluation. The duties listed above are typical examples of the work performed; not all duties assigned are included, nor is it expected that all similar positions will be assigned every duty.

### **Supervisory Responsibilities**

Research and evaluation data analyst will be responsible for direct supervision of two research and evaluation staff members (an Evaluation Program Specialist and a Project Specialist). She/he will carry out supervisory responsibilities in accordance with the organization's policies and applicable laws. Responsibilities include interviewing, hiring, and training employees; planning, assigning, and directing work; appraising performance; rewarding and disciplining employees; addressing complaints and resolving problems. Specifically, works with and supervises evaluation specialist and project specialist on statewide and regional level FTF strategy implementation related work and research and evaluation studies, as identified in the FTF evaluation plan and strategic operational plan.

### **Qualification and Experience**

Doctoral degree (PhD) or Master's degree in early childhood development/education, developmental psychology, research methodology, public health, social welfare, public policy, public administration, educational psychology or related field. Doctoral degree (PhD) is preferred.

- For those with a doctoral degree (PhD), a minimum of three years of experience in research and analysis in a public agency, health, education, or non-profit organizational environment is required.

- For those with a Master's degree, a minimum of five years of experience in research and analysis in a public agency, health, education, or non-profit organizational environment is required.
- A minimum of two years of experience in a managerial role is required.

### **Essential Knowledge, Skills and Abilities**

- Demonstrated proficiency and experience with statistical databases/software packages (e.g. SPSS, MySQL).
- Strong statistical and analytical skills (quantitative and qualitative) are required, including ability to independently develop an analysis plan, analyze data and create summary reports.
- Proficiency in data management, data quality assurance, including maintaining detailed and accurate data files, codebooks and syntaxes.
- Proficiency in MS Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook).
- Extensive knowledge and experience with effective practices of research and analysis design/methods and evaluation research, theory and practice.
- Knowledge of early childhood development research.
- Knowledge of culturally sensitive research and evaluation approaches.
- Ability to create data reports, develop procedure manuals and business requirements for IT.
- Ability to effectively communicate data findings to a wide variety of constituents (e.g. staff, FTF board, regional councils, stakeholders, general public, professional conferences).
- Proficiency with using large nationally representative data sets (e.g. Census)
- Proficiency in maintaining data integrity/confidentiality following organizational data security policies.
- Proficiency and experience in writing grant proposals, including developing scope for research and evaluation studies.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, especially the ability to interact successfully with staff members from various levels of the organization, including leadership.
- Strong communication skills, including the ability to write and speak clearly, succinctly and in a manner that appeals to a wide audience.
- Strong leadership, creative problem solving and analytical skills.
- Experience leading, conducting and managing educational research and evaluation projects that require multiple research designs and methodologies.
- Fluency in English is required.
- Experience in public presentations and training.
- Reliable, regular and punctual attendance at work during core business hours.

### **Core Competencies**

- Impeccable integrity, positive attitude, mission-driven and self-directed with a demonstrated passion for First Thing First's mission and commitment to working collaboratively with FTF management team and colleagues.
- Ability to participate in a team as well as lead a team, manage multiple and often simultaneous tasks, and create a work environment that is recognized for a high level of ethical integrity, organization, timeliness, cost-effectiveness, accuracy, and results.
- Demonstrated ability to work independently, meet deadlines, and coordinate with colleagues at varying organizational levels.
- Adaptable and reliable in the face of conflict, crisis, or changing priorities.

- Politically astute and tactful; attentive to the perspectives and competing interests of various internal and external stakeholders; and deals effectively with situations requiring tact, judgment and composure.

**Other Knowledge, Skills and Abilities**

- Knowledge of policy trends in early childhood development, including best practices in prevention and/or intervention research is preferred.
- Knowledge and experience in extracting data from data cubes/data warehouses, structured query language, and query reporting is preferred.
- Experience working in the education sector and a demonstrated familiarity with the policy issues and challenges of public Pre-K, K-12 education is preferred.
- Knowledge of data regulation policies (e.g. HIPPA, FERPA) is preferred.

Review of resumes will begin on Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014 and continue until the position is filled. For first consideration, please submit your cover letter, comprehensive resume/CV and three professional references by the close of business on Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014 to:

[www.azstatejobs.gov](http://www.azstatejobs.gov)

In the AZ State Personnel System, the position is classified as a Grade 25 with a salary range of \$70,000 to \$82,000 dependent upon education and experience. The position is not covered under the State of Arizona Merit system rules. The State of Arizona offers an outstanding comprehensive benefits package.



## **Our Beliefs, Actions and Performance**

**We Believe, in order for First Things First to live our Vision, Mission and Values, we:**

*Respect diverse contributions and perspectives as being fundamental to our success.*

*Demonstrate individual and collective responsibility by fulfilling our commitments and excelling in our performance.*

*Conduct ourselves with personal and professional integrity, acting at all times in ways that bring respect and honor to each other, our work and our organization.*

**We Act on our commitment to create positive outcomes for Arizona's young children through:**

Efficient and effective stewardship of resources;

Comprehensive systems approach and organizational planning that focus on clear priorities, realistic expectations and vigorous assessment;

Open, honest and clear channels of communication that foster trust;

Continuous inquiry, learning and reflection;

Coordination and leadership by volunteers, state, local and tribal partners and advocates;

Acknowledgment of and honor for the sovereignty of tribal governments in our work.

**We Perform in a manner that:**

Empowers employees' mutual respect, teamwork and ethical behavior;

Encourages innovation, promotes excellence and creative problem solving;

Cultivates staff development, provides feedback and reflection on performance and celebrates success;

Responds to the evolving nature of our work with flexibility and adaptability;

Creates a positive atmosphere and promotes a healthy work environment and life balance.